



Prosecuting Public Corruption; Protecting Public Dollars

In January 2005, State Assemblyman Anthony Imprevuto was sentenced to five years probation and a \$10,000 fine for misusing campaign funds.

A 17-year veteran of the New Jersey Legislature, Imprevuto was required to step down from his Assembly seat, barred from any future public employment, and ordered by the Court to repay \$50,000 in campaign funds that he admitted using for such personal expenses as vacation junkets, income taxes and a family wedding.

Throughout 2005, the Attorney General's Office, through its Division of Criminal Justice, State Police and Office of Government Integrity, continued to prosecute government officials, members of law enforcement and others whose actions betrayed the public trust — and cost taxpayers money.

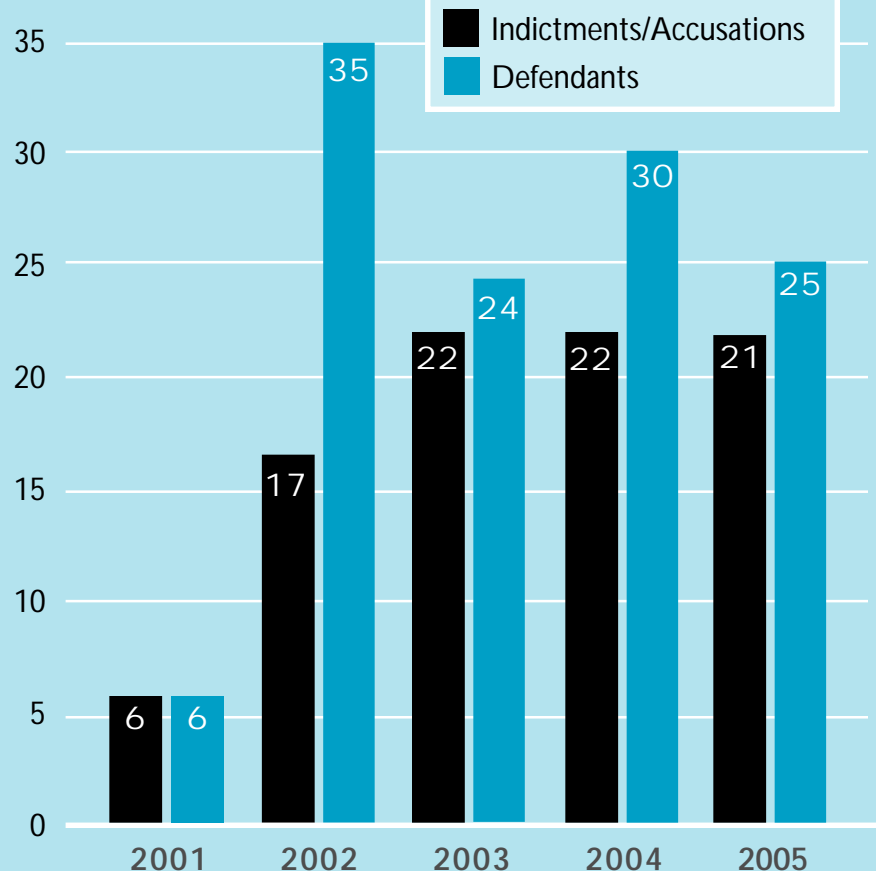
Old Bridge Township Corruption Probe

On December 15, 2005, John P. Vincenti, former Director of Community Development/Township Engineer for Old Bridge Township, Middlesex County, pleaded guilty to a third-degree State charge of unlawfully receiving gifts by a public servant. As part of a plea agreement with the Division of Criminal Justice, Vincenti admitted to seeking — and receiving — financial favors from a local developer. The indictment charged that, from May 2003 through August 2003, Vincenti solicited and received \$3,800 from a development firm known as At-

lantic Realty, which was used to pay for landscaping services at his Ocean County residence. Atlantic Realty manages various housing developments in the Old Bridge Township area including Matchaponix Hills, Matchaponix Estates (Rocky Creek), and Presidential Estates. In his official capacity in Old Bridge Township government, Vincenti supervised the township engineering, planning and code enforcement divi-

sions. In addition to charging that Vincenti sought and accepted money from a developer, the original State indictment against him alleged that, when Vincenti learned the Division of Criminal Justice was seeking financial records and documents concerning his activities, he tried to thwart the investigation and induce potential witnesses to lie to a State grand jury. Vincenti was scheduled to be sen-

Public Corruption Case Statistics



These statistics show a consistently high level of productivity by the Division of Criminal Justice in prosecuting public corruption cases.

Official admits taking gifts

By LONNIE MACK
STAFF WRITER

MIDDLESEX COUNTY: John P. Vincenti, who served as Old Bridge Township's engineer and director of community development, forfeited his job and his right to hold public office

Tree services cost him his Old Bridge job

at his home in Brick from a Woodbridge developer.

Vincenti, 43, also will face up to five years probation and was ordered to

Frederick DeVesa on Feb. 24.

In exchange for Vincenti's guilty plea to receiving gifts as a public servant

of the Division of Criminal Justice, agreed to dismiss four other charges lodged against Vincenti in a January indictment. Those charges include official

servant, obstruction of justice and witness tampering.

While being questioned yesterday by his Roseland-based attorney, James

\$3,800 in tree-cutting services from Stonaker Tree Service, which was hired by Atlantic Realty Corp. Woodbridge to remove trees from his home property in Brick.

Atlantic Realty managed several Old Bridge area developments including Matchaponix Hills

tenced in February 2006, facing a maximum of five years in State Prison, a fine of up to \$15,000, and permanent debarment from public service.

The Vincenti indictment stemmed from an on-going investigation focused on allegations of bribery and corruption related to the Old Bridge Township engineering and code department. The investigation, conducted by state investigators assigned to the Division of Criminal Justice's Anti-trust and Procurement Fraud Unit, targeted additional allegations that public employees solicited money or favors from developers, contractors, and others doing business in the township in exchange for expedited or favorable service and rulings on applications, permits and inspections.

In March 2005, a second Old Bridge Township official, Engineering Inspector Barry C. Bowers, was indicted. Bowers, of Point Pleasant, was charged with two counts of second degree official misconduct, three counts of acceptance or receipt of unlawful benefit by a public servant, and six counts of gifts to a public servant.

As Engineering Inspector for Old Bridge, Bowers was responsible for the permitting functions of the department, including fee assessment and collection, applications and plan review, permit issuance, inspection and occupancy. The State's indictment charges that, at various times from 1999 through 2003, Bowers used his government position to solicit and receive gifts and favors for himself and others — including top-of-the-line kitchen cabinets and countertops, Andersen brand windows, a furnace and a garage door — valued at more than \$27,000 from developers and/or contractors doing business in Old Bridge. As of this writing, the Bower indictment remains pending.

Ex-Bloomfield Personnel Director Sentenced to Prison for Embezzlement

The former Personnel Director for Bloomfield, Essex County, was sentenced to a five-year State Prison term and ordered to repay the municipality nearly \$500,000 in embezzled public funds after pleading guilty in 2005

to official misconduct. Joanne Tricarico, 56, of Lincoln Park, pleaded guilty on May 3, 2005 to a criminal Accusation charging official misconduct and theft by deception. In pleading guilty, Tricarico acknowledged that while employed as the Bloomfield municipal Personnel Director, she was responsible for managing a publicly-funded health insurance benefit account for township employees. The account was designed to reimburse township employees for pharmacy costs and prescription drugs. Tricarico admitted that, between January 1997 and March 2004, she wrote checks for personal use from the pharmacy account and attempted to cover up the thefts by making fraudulent entries in transaction journals used to record withdrawals from the pharmacy reimbursement account. As part of her sentence, Tricarico was ordered by a state Superior Court Judge to pay restitution of \$482,578 — the total amount she embezzled between January 1997 and March 2004.

Essex County Investigator Charged With Theft of Cash from Corpse

In 2005, the Attorney General's Office charged an Essex County Prosecutor's Office investigator, 33-year-old John J. Cosgrove, with stealing money entrusted to him through his position as a crime scene investigator — money that should have been secured as

evidence in an ongoing murder investigation.

As a crime scene investigator, Cosgrove was required to process and photograph crime scenes involving homicides, carjackings, police shootings, and other first-degree crimes. The indictment alleged that, at a homicide scene in 2002, more than \$8,000 cash was found in the pockets of the victims' pants by Investigator Cosgrove, and that he took the money. (The murder victim was identified as Dennis "The Grip" Fiore.) In 2003, the New Jersey State Police and the Division of Criminal Justice's Organized Crime and Racketeering Bureau took control of the Fiore homicide investigation. The State's subsequent indictment charges Cosgrove with falsifying official police investigation and evidence reports to conceal his theft of the money.

The Cosgrove indictment came in the wake of ongoing investigations targeting corruption and misconduct in the Newark Police Department. Three Newark police officers were indicted by the State on misconduct-related criminal charges in 2004. Another Newark officer pleaded guilty in 2004 to targeting certain criminal offenders for extortion and theft.

New Charges Against Top Official in Commerce Commission Probe

In July 2005, Attorney General Harvey announced that an ongoing Division of Criminal Justice investigation targeting public corruption in the cabinet-level New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission had resulted in additional criminal charges against Lesley Devereaux, the Commission's former chief-of-staff and vice-president of operations.

Specifically, a state Grand Jury indictment charged Devereaux, of Piscataway, with theft by deception, tampering with public records, and forgery. Devereaux had already been indicted in December 2004 on charges of official misconduct. The 2005 charges resulted from a continuing investigation by the Special Prosecutions Bureau within the Division of Criminal Jus-

Investigator arraigned in theft of evidence

Lawman denies taking cash off body

BY GUY STERLING
STAR-LEDGER STAFF
An Essex County Prosecutor's Office investigator facing charges he stole more than \$8,000 found on

Ex-Hudson legislator gets probation, \$10,000 fine

Imprevuduto also must repay \$50,000 in embezzled funds.

BY DANIELA MURIELLO
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Former Assemblyman Anthony Imprevuduto (D-Hudson) was fined \$10,000, placed on 180-day probation and required to repay \$50,000 in his sentencing hearing on charges he used campaign funds for political purposes and for his daughter's wedding and expensive spouse travel.

Three counts of embezzlement from public funds and one count of falsifying public records were the charges against Imprevuduto, the deputy Attorney General who headed the investigation. He was sentenced to 180 days of probation and a \$10,000 fine, and ordered to repay the state out of nearly \$50,000 in embezzled funds.

During his sentencing hearing, Imprevuduto's attorney argued that his client was a "first-time offender" and that the charges were "technical." He also argued that his client had a "clean record" and that the charges were "technical." The judge, however, found the charges to be "substantial" and sentenced Imprevuduto to 180 days of probation and a \$10,000 fine, and ordered him to repay the state out of nearly \$50,000 in embezzled funds.



Sisters admit to scam for anti-homeless funds

By NINA RIZZO
FREEHOLD BUREAU

Three sisters, including a Howell nurse, and four privately held corporations acknowledged in Superior Court in Mercer County Wednesday their participation in a scheme to defraud the state out of nearly \$24,000 in anti-homeless funds.

The investigation revealed that DCA paid \$33,859 for 14 fraudulent claims submitted by the women.

Four Cranford-based investment firms — C&C, E&C, F&C, and G&C — were also involved in the scheme.

tice. The probe uncovered new evidence that Devereaux — using an alias — had applied fraudulently for food stamps through the Middlesex County Board of Social Services.

The indictment alleged that Devereaux, a licensed attorney in New Jersey since 1989, collected nearly \$2,000 in food stamps from October 2000 through May 2001. During that period, Devereaux and her spouse allegedly earned \$60,000 in household income, all the while failing to report significant financial assets including the contents of several bank accounts. Devereaux remains free on bail while awaiting further court proceedings. The original, December 2004 indictment against her charged that she used her high-ranking government position to benefit herself and several family members.

Other corruption-related case highlights from 2005 included:

❖ **Three guilty of defrauding the Department of Community Affairs —**

In September 2005, three defendants — including a nurse, a waitress and a Certified Public Accountant — pleaded guilty to State charges that they participated in a scheme to defraud the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) of more than \$33,800 in public monies earmarked to prevent individuals and families from losing their homes. The indictment was the result of an investigation focused on an alleged conspiracy to file false applications for financial benefits through DCA's Homelessness Prevention Program. The Homelessness Prevention Program provides grants to eligible individuals and families who, through no fault of their own, are in jeopardy of becoming homeless. The defendants were accused of falsifying applications for financial benefits made available by DCA between January and August 2004.

The three individuals who pleaded guilty were ordered by a Superior Court Judge to pay full restitution of \$33,859 to the DCA. At the time of the guilty pleas, one defendant was admitted into Pre-Trial Intervention. A second defendant was sentenced to probation. A third defendant was directed to forfeit her CPA license. That defendant, who was a landlord and the owner of four corporations charged in the case, was ordered to forfeit \$101,000 as part of the sentence imposed upon her and the corporations.

❖ **NJ Transit employee indicted —**

In April 2005, New Jersey Transit employee Douglas Deleeuw was indicted on charges related to the theft of more than \$23,000 in bus parts, and the sale of those stolen parts via the Internet. The State Grand Jury indictment charged Deleeuw with official misconduct and other corruption-related charges. Deleeuw is a former stock clerk at the New Jersey Transit Garage located in

Howell Township, Monmouth County. (His employment was terminated.) His alleged crimes took place between December 2003 and December 2004. In addition to charges of stealing bus parts and auctioning them, Deleeuw is also accused of trying to conceal the thefts and obstruct the State's investigation by, among other things, returning stolen parts to inventory. The indictment resulted from an investigation initiated by NJ Transit Police into the apparent removal of an excessive number of replacement bus parts from inventory at the Howell garage.

❖ **Office of Government Integrity obtains guilty plea from school construction contractor —**

In October 2005 Manny Bana, a former school construction contractor once based in Somerset County, pleaded guilty to criminal charges related to the embezzlement of nearly \$1 million in public funds earmarked for school construction and renovation projects in Edison Township. Bana, 38, pleaded guilty in Superior Court in Middlesex County to one count each of making false contract representation for a government contract, and theft of funds by failure to make required disposition. Both counts represent second-degree charges resulting from an investigation by the Attorney General's Office of Government Integrity (OGI). As the result of a plea agreement, Bana is expected to receive a five-year State Prison term, and to be ordered to pay an as-yet-undetermined amount of restitution and fines.

Bana was the sole owner and operator of the Somerville-based Icon Construction Corp., a company hired by the Edison Township Board of Education in December 2002 to act as primary contractor on nine different public school construction projects throughout the Edison district. The projects were funded in part by the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC). An investigation by OGI revealed that Bana stole by accepting payments as primary contractor on the Edison school construction jobs, then withholding payment to six subcontractors hired to help with the work despite representing that he had paid those subcontractors. Attorney General Harvey noted that, while contractors failing to pay subcontractors is not a new problem, this is the first successful criminal prosecution of a contractor by the State for such conduct. Bana was indicted in connection with his Edison crimes in late March 2005. He turned himself in shortly thereafter. At this writing, Bana is free on \$25,000 bail pending formal sentencing in early 2006.



*Tracy Thompson,
Acting Director*

Office of Government Integrity

The Office of Government Integrity was created by Attorney General's Administrative Executive Directive in 2002. The agency consists of four units including: Fiscal Integrity in School Construction, Professional Responsibility, Criminal Matters and Attorney General Referrals. The Fiscal Integrity in School Construction Unit is charged with ensuring integrity in the financing and construction of school facilities, and the implementation of the State's Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act (EFCFA) — the largest public works program in New Jersey history. Under the program, the State is spending up to \$8.6 billion to build and renovate public schools through the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC). As part of its regular duties, the Fiscal Integrity in School Construction unit does integrity screening related to the pre-qualification of contractors and professionals seeking to handle SCC-funded school construction and renovation work. In 2005, the OGI completed more than 1,000 pre-qualification investigations and opened 220 new cases. The OGI's Professional Responsibility Unit monitors compliance by the Attorney General's Office, and County Prosecutors' Offices, with the Attorney General's Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures Manual. OGI is authorized to conduct operations audits of internal affairs units in order to identify systemic problems, find ways to eliminate actual or apparent conflicts of interest, and to assure the integrity of internal affairs investigations.

While the Division of Criminal Justice is the Attorney General's principal investigative and prosecutorial agency for criminal matters, the OGI's Criminal Matters unit has authority — and law enforcement powers — to investigate and prosecute cases as well. The Office of Government Integrity also handles other matters assigned to it by the Attorney General. While these referrals do not fall into any one category, most involve fact-finding reviews or investigations into conduct by government officials or government agencies.

- *Acting Director, Tracy M. Thompson*
- *William Newsome, Chief Investigator*

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